

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

**DANIEL GOHL
CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER**

DATE: April 22, 2020

TO: All Principals

FROM: Daniel F. Gohl
Chief Academic Officer

VIA: Valerie S. Wanza, Ph.D.
Chief School Performance and Accountability Officer

SUBJECT: **PRELIMINARY SAT/NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP QUALIFYING TEST AND PRELIMINARY SAT 8/9: A THREE-YEAR REVIEW OF DATA, 2017-2018 TO 2019-2020**

This memo, the snapshot, and the attached appendices summarize student participation and scores¹ from two types of Preliminary SAT tests offered during the years 2017-2018 through 2019-2020: the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), offered to tenth and eleventh grade students, and the Preliminary SAT 8/9 (PSAT 8/9), offered to ninth grade students. Both PSAT administrations are administered by The College Board and provide essential feedback to students, educators, and parents on reading, writing, and mathematical skills essential for success in college-level coursework. Additionally, the PSAT provides students with early exposure to a college entrance-type test (similar to the SAT), and helps educators identify students to compete in the National Merit Scholarship Competition, as well as, identifies students who may benefit from advanced course opportunities. The College Board provides an “Insights” report that assists teachers in identifying specific skill gaps and where additional instruction is needed. The College Board also provides a question-by-question breakdown that shows which questions each student is struggling with and where within the test they may be losing stamina, impacting their overall score. The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) covers the cost of participation for all tenth-grade students in an effort to eliminate obstacles to participation by under-represented groups. Beginning in 2016-2017, Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) offered a PSAT 8/9 administration to ninth grade students at traditional schools, free of charge.

- **For 10th and 11th grade students participating in the PSAT/NMSQT, participation rates were stable** over the 3-year-period, with 86.1% of 10th grade students and 32.2% of 11th grade students participating in 2019-2020. Eleventh grade students must pay to test, so their participation rates are consequently lower than 10th grade students’ participation rates (see Appendix A-1).
- Among those students enrolled in schools participating in the PSAT 8/9 contract **89.9% of 9th grade students (at traditional schools) participated** (see Appendix A-2).
- For 10th and 11th grade students there was a gap in participation between White and minority students, with White students participating at higher rates than Black or Hispanic students. For **9th grade students participating in the PSAT 8/9, there was no racial gap between White students and minority students** (see Appendix B).
- There was a performance gap between females and males for 10th and 11th grade students, with females outpacing males in Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (EBRW), while males outpaced

¹ This memo, the snapshot, and the supporting appendices reflect data available from College Board as of 02-13-20.

females in Math (see Appendix J). For 9th grade students participating in the PSAT 8/9, females outperformed males on the EBRW section but had equivalent scores on the Math section of the test (see Appendix K).

- Broward scores on both EBRW and Math for 10th grade students were on par with Florida-wide scores, but lagged behind national scores. This difference between national and Florida scores for 10th grade students taking the PSAT/NMSQT is likely attributable to the statewide initiative to fund the test for all students in tenth grade, thus leading to a greater range of academic success amongst participants in Florida than across the U.S. (see Appendix C-1).
- **Scores for 11th grade students in Broward taking the PSAT/NMSQT outpaced scores Florida-wide** and were equivalent to national scores in EBRW and outpaced scores Florida-wide but lagged behind national scores in Math. Scores were down from the prior year for all three groups – Broward, Florida, and nationwide (see Appendix C-1).
- **For 9th grade students taking the PSAT 8/9, Broward scores slightly outpaced Florida scores for EBRW** and were equivalent to Florida scores in Math. Broward scores were on par with national scores in EBRW and slightly lower than national scores in Math (see Appendix C-2).
- New to the 2018-2019 school year, scores of 430 or higher on the Math section of the PSAT/NMSQT earned concordance for the Algebra I test graduation requirement. A small portion (1,460 in 2019-2020) of 9th grade students take the PSAT/NMSQT as well as 10th and 11th grade students. In 2019-2020, two hundred and sixty-six (266) or 36.0 percent of 9th grade students who took the PSAT NMSQT earned concordance on the Algebra I test who had not yet met the requirement. Thirteen hundred and forty-nine (1,349) or 19.7 percent of 10th grade students, and one hundred and fifty-four (154) or 25.3 percent of 11th grade students met concordance via the PSAT/NMSQT for the Algebra I test graduation requirement who had not yet met the requirement (see Appendix D). Thus, in all, **1,769 students who still needed to pass the Algebra I graduation test requirement earned concordance through the PSAT/NMSQT in 2019-2020.**
- Legislation (CS/HB 7079) that would eliminate the 9th grade ELA test is currently making its way through the Florida House and Senate (Mueller, 2020). Should this bill pass it would leave the 9th grade PSAT 8/9 as the sole remaining test in 9th grade that would help predict how students will perform on the 10th grade FSA ELA, a graduation requirement. Student Assessment and Research has analyzed PSAT 8/9 results from 2017-2018 and compared them to 2018-2019 FSA ELA 10th grade results. There is a strong positive relationship between students' scores on the PSAT 8/9 EBRW and their scores on the 10th grade FSA ELA, meaning that students who score high on the PSAT 8/9 EBRW tend to score high on the FSA ELA 10th grade test, and students who score low on the PSAT 8/9 EBRW tend to score low on the FSA ELA 10th grade test. Student Assessment and Research ran an analysis that developed three levels of predictions of students achieving a level 3 and above on the FSA ELA 10th grade test. Students scoring below a 420 on PSAT 8/9 EBRW fall into the "Off-Track" group, a group of those who have less than a 50% likelihood of scoring a 3 or higher; students scoring between 420 and 430 on PSAT 8/9 fall into the "Approaching" group, a group of those who have a 50 to 64% likelihood of scoring a 3 or higher; and students scoring greater than 430 fall into the "On-Track" group, a group of those who have a 65% or greater likelihood of scoring a 3 or higher on the FSA ELA 10th grade test. These cut scores are distinctive from the College Board's College Readiness Benchmark for EBRW for 9th Grade on the PSAT 8/9 Test. The College Board's College Readiness Benchmarks are benchmarks set by the College Board and indicate whether or not students are on track to be ready for college in a particular subject area by the time they finish high school. The College Board Benchmark for EBRW grade 9 on the PSAT 8/9 Test is 410. This benchmark score falls into the "Off-Track" group. Thus a student could meet the College Board EBRW benchmark for 9th Grade EBRW and still be among those who have less than a 50% likelihood of scoring a 3 or higher

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on the FSA. A school-by-school breakdown of the percentage of 9th graders that fall into each of the three groups appears in Appendix L.

Please direct any questions or comments concerning this memo to **Richard Baum, Director, Student Assessment and Research, at 754-321-2500**. This memo, the snapshot, and appendices may also be accessed via the Student Assessment and Research website at <https://www.browardschools.com/sar>.

BCPS District staff can view and interact with PSAT data through the Department’s SAT and PSAT dashboard available on the SharePoint link below:

<https://browardcountyschools.sharepoint.com/sites/Intranet/Academics/TSD/SAR/Pages/PSAT-Dashboard.aspx>

References

Mueller, S. (2020, February 19). *Legislation that would make sweeping K-12 changes passes House panel: Some educators say it’s biased against schools with lots of low-income kids*. FLAPOL. <https://floridapolitics.com/archives/319856-legislation-making-sweeping-k-12-changes-passes-house-education-panel>

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Attachment

CC: School Board Members
Senior Leadership Team
Directors, School Performance and Accountability